

Message Text

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13

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 L-03 DRC-01 /050 W

----- 114241

R 140632Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

SECSTATE WASHDC 8728

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 4380

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN,PFOR,AF,PK

SUBJECT: ARIANA-PIA DISPUTE

REF: ISLAMABAD 6624

1. KABUL AGREES WITH AFGHAN AMBASSADOR POPAL THAT TURNING THIS ISSUE INTO POLITICAL DISPUTE AND NEWSPAPER WAR IS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. EVEN AS A STRAIGHT COMMERCIAL DISPUTE, IT APPEARS DIFFICULT OF RESOLUTION, WITHOUT ADDING ALL THE WEIGHT OF BILATERAL DIFFERENCES. WE HOPE PAKISTAN EMBASSY HERE IS SENDING SAME MESSAGE TO ISLAMABAD.

2 FYI EMBOFF RECEIVED SOME INFO ON ALLEGED DISCOUNT TICKET PRACTICES OF ARIANA. ACCORDING LOCAL PANAM REP, PIA REP, AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF ARIANA STAFF, ARIANA HAS MAINTAINED SCRUPULOUSLY LEGAL POSITION ON DISCOUNT SALES, WHILE WINKING AT DISCOUNT PRACTICES OF LONDON AND LAHORE TRAVEL AGENTS. APPARENTLY ARIANA SELLS NORMAL ROUND-TRIP TICKET LAHORE-KABUL-LAHORE, AND THEN ACCEPTS TICKETS FOR KABUL-LONDON-KABUL OBTAINED BY LAHORIS THROUGH TRAVEL AGENTS IN LONDON. THOSE TICKETS, ISSUED UNDER SPECIAL EXCURSION/GROUP TRAVEL OR OTHER SPECIAL BASIS, OFTEN OFFER SUBSTANTIAL DISCOUNTS. THIS PRACTICE SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR TO THOSE OF OTHER AIRLINES, INCLUDING, ACCORDING TO
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PIA AGENT, PIA ITSELF.

3 ANOTHER MAJOR AND POSSIBLY MORE IMPORTANT REASON FOR LAHORI TRAVEL THROUGH KABUL IS POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING LARGE APPLIANCES UNDER PERSONAL BAGGAGES SCHEME, SHIPPED FROM KABUL INSTEAD OF LONDON, AT MAJOR SAVINGS. ARIANA NOTES THAT, OF 70 TICKETED PASSENGERS REFUSED BOARDING AT LAHORE JULY 2, MORE THAN 50 HAVE SINCE BOARDED AT KABUL, AFTER PRESUMABLY TRAVELLING BY ROAD. ARIANA FEELS THAT IT NEED ONLY HOLD OUT, AND PRESSURE FROM LAHORIS WILL FORCE PIA ABANDON THIS QUARREL. IF THIS ESCALATES INTO POLITICAL QUESTION, SUCH A RESULT APPEARS UNLIKELY.
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